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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/694,269	10/29/2003	Tsuyoshi Uehara	021311A	4127

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EXAMINER

GREIMEL, JOCELYN

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3624

DATE MAILED: 04/20/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/694,269	Applicant(s) UEHARA ET AL.	
	Examiner Jocelyn W. Greimel	Art Unit 3624	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 October 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>see attached sheet</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. Claims 1-13 are objected to because of the following informalities. The use of "characterized in comprising" in the claims is vague and indefinite. For example in lines 9-10 on page 94, a recommended change would be to remove "characterized in comprising the steps that" and use "the server system comprising." On page 97 at line 5, it appears that the server system reference character ("2-1 or @-3") is incorrect. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

3. Claims 1, 2, 6-8 and 10-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 as being unpatentable over Kitchen et al, US Patent No. 6,289,322 (hereinafter Kitchen).

Regarding claims 1, 11 and 12, Kitchen discloses a server system, a related component and a computer program that receives and registers electronic invoices issued from the supplier system (col. 4, lines 36-49), each electronic invoice containing

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an identification code for identifying the electronic invoice, with the identification code being written by the supplier system (col. 3, lines 15-31).

Kitchen additionally discloses a server system that sends to the buyer system a GUI screen which notifies the buyer of at least one of the registered electronic invoices for the buyer and which prompts the buyer to approve the notified electronic invoice (col. 4, lines 49-63).

Kitchen additionally discloses responding to approving the notified electronic invoice by the buyer on the GUI screen displayed on the buyer system, either of the buyer system or the server system issues an electronic payment request which contains the identification code as same as that contained in the notified electronic invoice and written by the supplier system, to the finance system (col. 8, lines 46-67).

4. Kitchen additionally discloses receiving the electronic payment request, the finance system performing deposit/withdrawal processing of the buyer and supplier bank accounts for settlement of the electronic invoice which is identified by the identification code contained in the received electronic payment request, and sending to the supplier system or the server system an electronic deposit/withdrawal statement which contains the identification code as same as that contained in the received electronic payment request, so that the supplier or the server system is capable of specifying which electronic invoice have been settled in accordance with the identification code contained in the received deposit/withdrawal statement (col. 8, lines 46-67).

5. Regarding claim 2, Kitchen discloses a supplier system or the server system specifying the settled electronic invoice in accordance with the identification code contained in the deposit/withdrawal statement received from the finance system and the supplier system or the server system removes the specified settled electronic invoice from among the unsettled electronic invoices which were issued from the supplier system or registered by the server system (col. 4, lines 11-28).

6. Regarding claim 6, Kitchen discloses a server system detecting the status relating to opening or payment of each of a plurality of the registered electronic invoices issued by the supplier system and the server system informing the supplier system, the buyer system or the finance system of the detected status of each of the plurality of the registered electronic invoices (col. 4, lines 11-35).

7. Regarding claim 7, Kitchen discloses the server system detecting the status relating to opening or payment of each of a plurality of the registered electronic invoices issued by the supplier system and the server system preparing a list GUI screen which shows a list of the detected statuses of the plurality of the registered electronic invoices and sends the list GUI screen to the supplier system (col. 4, lines 11-35).

8. Regarding claim 8 and 13, Kitchen discloses a server system and related components managing the status of the registered electronic invoices by updating the status of the electronic invoices in response to the payment request issued from the buyer as well as to the notification of deposit/withdrawal processing or the deposit/withdrawal statement issued from the finance system and the server system

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notifying the supplier system, the buyer system or the finance system of the status of the managed electronic invoices (col. 4, lines 11-35).

9. Regarding claim 10, Kitchen discloses a supplier system receiving an electric order from the buyer and the supplier system issuing the electronic invoice for the buyer to the server system in response to the received electronic order (col. 4, lines 49-55).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

10. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

11. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

12. Claims 3-5 and 9 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kitchen et al, US Patent No. 6,289,322 (hereinafter Kitchen) and further in view of Dent et al, US Patent No. 6,128,603 (hereinafter Dent).

13. Regarding claim 3, Kitchen does not disclose a server system that prepares a calendar GUI screen which shows a calendar having spaces for dates; the server system establishing an invoice date relating to the registered electronic invoice for the buyer and putting a mark indicating the registered electronic invoice for the buyer on the space for the established invoice date among the spaces for dates on the calendar of the calendar GUI screen; and the server system sending the calendar GUI screen which shows the calendar having the invoice mark putted thereon, to a buyer system so that the buyer system displays the calendar GUI screen.

However, Dent discloses a calendar GUI screen which shows a calendar having spaces for dates (col. 8, lines 8-13 and figures 6-7); the server system establishing an invoice date relating to the registered electronic invoice for the buyer and putting a mark indicating the registered electronic invoice for the buyer on the space for the established invoice date among the spaces for dates on the calendar of the calendar GUI screen (col. 8, lines 8-16 and figure 6); and the server system sending the calendar GUI screen which shows the calendar having the invoice mark putted thereon, to a buyer system so that the buyer system displays the calendar GUI screen (col. 7, lines 56-67 – col. 8, lines 1-16 and figures 6-7).

It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the calendar GUI screen which shows a calendar that marks invoice dates (discussed in detail above) of Dent with an online billing system which displays account information and receives payment input as disclosed by Kitchen (in detail above).

The motivation would be to increase the ease of use of the online billing system for the customer. The calendar would be a clear way to display to the customer the details of the online billing system such as invoice dates and dates of payment. This clear visual layout would likely increase timely payments and decrease late payments and account overdrafts.

14. Regarding claims 4 and 9, Kitchen does not disclose a server system establishing a payment date relating to payment for the registered electronic invoice for the buyer, and putting a payment mark indicating payment on the space for the established payment date among the spaces for dates on the calendar of the calendar GUI screen; and the server system putting a relationship mark indicating a relationship of correspondence between the payments and the registered electronic invoice, on the calendar of the calendar GUI. Dent teaches a server system establishing a payment date relating to payment for the registered electronic invoice for the buyer, and putting a payment mark indicating payment on the space for the established payment date among the spaces for dates on the calendar of the calendar GUI screen; and the server system putting a relationship mark indicating a relationship of correspondence between the payments and the registered electronic invoice, on the calendar of the calendar GUI (col. 7, lines 61-67 – col. 8, lines 1-8).

It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine a server system with a calendar GUI screen with payment date marks (discussed in detail above) of Dent with an online billing system which displays account information and receives payment input as disclosed by Kitchen (in detail above).

The motivation would be to increase the ease of use of the online billing system for the customer. The calendar and related marks would be a clear way to display to the customer the details of the online billing system such as invoice dates and dates of payment. This clear visual layout would likely increase timely payments and decrease late payments and account overdrafts.

15. Regarding claim 5, Kitchen does not disclose a server system that detects the status relating to opening or payment of the registered electronic invoice for the buyer; and a server system that changes the invoice mark indicating the registered electronic invoice for the buyer on the calendar of the calendar GUI screen, in accordance with the detected status. Dent teaches a server system that detects the status relating to opening or payment of the registered electronic invoice for the buyer; and a server system that changes the invoice mark indicating the registered electronic invoice for the buyer on the calendar of the calendar GUI screen, in accordance with the detected status (col. 7, lines 56-67 – col. 8, lines 1-29).

It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine a server system with status marks (discussed in detail above) of Dent with an online billing system which displays account information and receives payment input as disclosed by Kitchen (in detail above).

The motivation would be to increase the ease of use of the online billing system for the customer. The calendar and related marks would be a clear way to display to the customer the details of the online billing system such as invoice dates, dates of

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payment and past payments. This clear visual layout would likely increase timely payments and decrease late payments and account overdrafts.

16. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jocelyn W. Greimel whose telephone number is (571) 272-3734. The examiner can normally be reached Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vincent Millin can be reached on (571) 272-6747. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Jocelyn W. Greimel
Examiner 3624
April 10, 2006



HANI M. KAZIMI
PRIMARY EXAMINER